

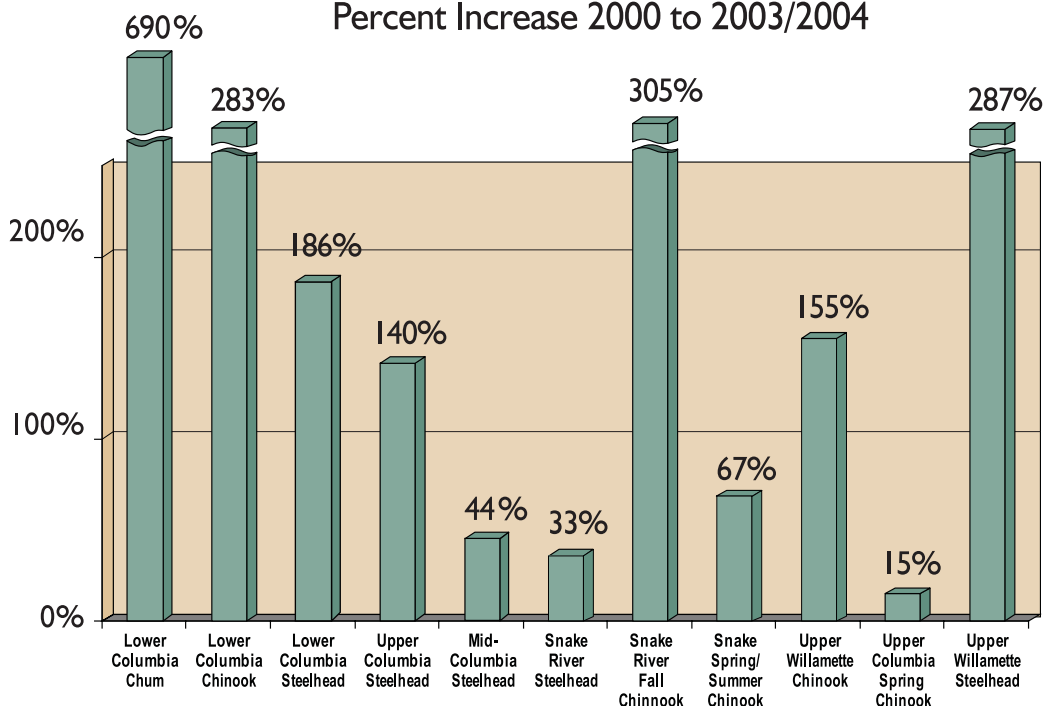


# Status of Columbia Basin Fish Runs

## Salmon Return Increases

Selected ESA-listed stocks

Percent Increase 2000 to 2003/2004



Source: NOAA Fisheries

## Current Status of Select Pacific Northwest ESA-Listed Salmon Stocks

Stock	% of Wild/ Hatchery stocks	2000 Returns	2001 Returns	2002 Returns	2003 Returns	2004 Returns	% Change 2000 to 2003/2004
Lower Columbia Chum	100% wild	2,500	2,000	4,000	20,000	*	+ 690%
Lower Columbia Chinook	50% wild 50% hatchery	18,908	37,569	72,468	*	*	+ 283%
Lower Columbia Steelhead	70% wild 30% hatchery	4,200	5,000	9,626	12,002	*	+ 186%
Upper Columbia Steelhead	20% wild 80% hatchery	7,796	20,837	15,867	17,652	18,727	+ 140%
Mid-Columbia Steelhead	70% wild 30% hatchery	23,448	28,138	33,765	*	*	+ 44%
Snake River Steelhead	15% wild 85% hatchery	115,161	259,145	218,718	180,672	153,415	+ 33%
Snake River Fall Chinook	40% wild 60% hatchery	3,696	8,915	12,351	11,732	14,953	+ 305%
Snake Spring/ Summer Chinook	20% wild 80% hatchery	51,835	192,632	101,226	98,763	86,501	+ 67%
Upper Willamette Chinook	20% wild 80% hatchery	37,594	52,685	83,136	117,600	95,969	+ 155%
Upper Columbia Spring Chinook	50% wild 50% hatchery	1,580	14,958	3,022	1,824	*	+ 15%
Upper Willamette Steelhead	75% wild 25% hatchery	3,200	10,100	16,500	9,472	12,381	+ 287%

Source: NOAA Fisheries

\* Data not available for 2003. Percent of change from 2000 is calculated from 2002. Snake River sockeye, not included in chart, is currently in the experimental stage, supported almost exclusively by safety-net hatchery group.

# Frequently Asked Questions about Columbia Basin Salmon Returns

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## **What is the status of the runs?**

- For the fifth year in a row (2000-2004), near record salmon returns in most areas of the Columbia and Snake basins indicate that, with help from improved ocean conditions, our approach to improving hydrosystem passage and survival, salmon habitat and hatchery practices is having a positive impact on listed fish. Returns for nearly all stocks far surpassed ten-year averages.
- Historically, year-by-year salmon returns show a great deal of volatility.

## **What about the reports of a low return of spring Chinook this year?**

- As of May 17, 2005, approximately 60,000 spring Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam. This number is indeed lower than the predicted returns. Sometimes run size predictions differ substantially from actual returns.
- The number of 2005 spring Chinook still represents a significant number of spring Chinook when compared to runs less than ten years ago. In 1996, only 12,000 spring Chinook were counted at Bonneville.
- This year's spring Chinook run is made up of juveniles that migrated out of the Columbia River in 2002 and 2003. In 2003, survival through the Columbia River hydrosystem for the out-migrating juveniles was one of the highest ever observed.
- The return of jacks - precocious salmon that return a year ahead of the rest of its age group - was strong in 2004. Jacks are often considered an indicator of the following runs.
- These facts demonstrate that river conditions are only one factor affecting salmon survival and may be overshadowed by other influences that scientists only partially understand, such as ocean conditions.
- The federal agencies are continuing to monitor the spring Chinook returns and will conduct a targeted scientific review of in-river conditions.

## **What about sea lions eating the fish?**

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (which owns and operates Bonneville Dam) has estimated that, over the last few years, between 0.5 and 2.0 percent of the total adult spring Chinook run has been eaten by pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) in the Bonneville tailrace alone.
- To discourage sea lion incursions, engineers and biologists have been using escalating harassment techniques agreed upon by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Marine Fisheries Service and Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife, aimed at keeping the pinnipeds out of the fishways. These techniques are consistent with the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

## **What will it take to recover these fish?**

- Recovery of these fish to sustainable population is a common goal among all parties working on salmon issues. Every citizen in the Pacific Northwest has a stake in this work. Salmon are a cultural icon and provide important economic benefits to the region. If we are to be successful we must work together to support our dual goals of a healthy environment and a strong economy.